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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LJUBLJANA 000413

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SUBJECT: SLOVENIA PREDICTS "BORING" SEPTEMBER 15-16 GAERC

REF: STATE 96598

Classified By: CDA Brad Freden, Reasons 1.4 (b,d)

Summary

¶1. (C) On September 11, Emboff delivered our points in advance of the September 15-16 GAERC meeting (reftel) to MFA European Correspondent Aljaz Arih, who commented that this would be a "pretty boring GAERC." Arih said there would be Council Conclusions on Somalia, which would be the GAERC's most important decision, and on Zimbabwe, and Belarus. The most important move on Georgia would be approving the monitoring mission, to be called EUMMGeorgia. Arih predicted a difficult decision on the draft declaration announcing the entry of force of the SAA for Serbia. Turkey was not on the agenda. End Summary.

Georgia

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¶2. (C) Arih said that Slovenia was very happy with the outcome of the EU troika's September 8 meetings, and hoped that the September 8 agreement would be implemented. He noted Slovenia's concern about avoiding problems of different interpretations of the agreement. Arih clarified that although Slovenia still had not taken a final decision on how many monitors it would send to Georgia, the number would likely be between 6 and 8; they would participate in the EUMMGeorgia. Slovenia also favored strengthening cooperation with Georgia in the framework of the European Neighborhood Policy, including strongly supporting visa liberalization and a free trade agreement.

Zimbabwe

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¶3. (C) Arih commented that there would not be much new on Zimbabwe and that Slovenia's position was in line with our points. He noted that Slovenia felt it necessary to find the right balance between pressure and encouragement. The Council Conclusions would express concern over the situation there; state that non-recognition of the June 27 election results was legitimate; refer to further measures if there was not any progress; support African efforts; focus on humanitarian action; and note that the EU stands ready with positive measures if there is progress with the transition.

Somalia

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¶4. (C) Arih stated that approving an EU naval operation for Somalia would be the most important decision for the FMs at the September GAERC. He noted that it would not be an ESDP mission, but a military coordination of naval operations of EU member states willing to send vessels to the region. He added that the operation would be called EUNAVCO. Arih also reviewed the Council Conclusions for Somalia: welcoming the progress in the political process under UN mediation; expressing the EU's readiness to help with the police mission; expressing concern about the deterioration of the humanitarian situation, and launching EUNAVCO. He said that Slovenia wanted an inclusive approach to finding a solution to the crisis in Somalia and supported the UN Special Representative.

Serbia

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¶5. (C/NF) According to Arih, the main purpose of the FMs' discussion was to decide about the interim agreement for Serbia. He predicted that it would be difficult because the Netherlands was still not on board. Arih said that the draft declaration announcing its entry of force stated that Serbia must continue to cooperate with ICTY and hand over the last two fugitives. It also noted that the start of the SAA's ratification process would be based on Serbia meeting those conditions. Slovenia strongly supported the entry of force of the SAA for Serbia.

¶6. (C) Arih commented that it was difficult to predict what FM Rupel would say on the Western Balkans, explaining that

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Rupel had his own ideas, which he would not share with others in the MFA before the GAERC. Arih noted that the MFA's prepared national position is that Serbia's further progress on the path to European integration could positively affect stability in the region. He also agreed that EULEX must operate throughout Kosovo. He stated, however, that Slovenia still had not decided its position on Serbia seeking an advisory opinion from the ICJ. He speculated that Slovenia most likely would abstain, and he was pretty sure that Slovenia would not vote against it. He added that discussions within the EU were ongoing and that there was not a common position to abstain. He opined that some member states would support Serbia's move.

Belarus

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¶7. (C) Arih noted that the FMs would, without discussion, adopt Council Conclusions on Belarus: welcoming the release of all political prisoners; stating that compliance with democratic principles and the rule of law were the conditions for the start of more EU engagement; and welcoming the deployment of OSCE observers for the September 28 elections. Arih commented that there were some member states, including Poland, that favored lifting sanctions. Those member states compared the EU's relationship with Belarus to Cuba, where the EU had lifted sanctions even though there were still political prisoners. Arih added that Solana's call to Lukashenko the week of September 1 had been a "clear signal" that the EU was ready to engage Belarus, but it would be almost impossible to do so if Belarus were to recognize Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

FREDEN